

# Miss Education Scott County Times

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## Livingston Opposes Nine-Month Term

We have received word on good authority that Scott County Representative Elvin Livingston is definitely opposed to a statewide nine-month school term.

This means Mr. Livingston is not in favor of helping to bring Mississippi education nearer to the level of other states. At present, Mississippi is the only state in the nation still clinging to the ancient eight-month school.

A nine-month term not only would raise teacher salaries in county schools but also in separate school districts, like Forest, which operate on nine-month schedules.

Under terms of a bill introduced in the legislature, the state would pay the entire cost of the ninth month, as far as the minimum program is concerned.

There would be one-eighth more for teacher salaries, transportation, teacher retirement, instructional supplies, and other factors. No increase is mentioned for county administrative costs.

In Forest, based on this year's budget, the school would receive an additional \$17,907 a year without any increase in the local contribution.

Forest teachers would get an automatic raise of \$300, the same raise applied to teachers in eight-month schools if the terms are extended another month.

In the \$17,907 that Forest would receive, \$844 is for local administration, \$1668 for transportation, \$1519 for supplies and other costs, \$696 for social security and retirement, and \$13,180 for teacher salaries.

All this money would be available without any increase in local funds, and of course without any increase in taxes.

If this same \$17,907 were earmarked for teachers alone, as proposed by Mr. Livingston and under other bills introduced in the legislature which would increase salaries under the minimum education program, Forest would be required to pay into the minimum program \$5091, and the state would furnish the other \$12,618.

This would result in an increase in taxes of .93 mills for the Forest separate school district. The district has an assessed valuation of \$5.

501,530 and is allotted 45 teachers. There is a property assessment of \$122,256 behind each teacher.

Scott county schools would get over \$62,000 a year if the nine-month term is approved. The county school district has an assessed valuation of \$5,499,027 and is allotted 149 teachers—an assessed valuation behind each county teacher of \$39,906.

An increase in teachers salaries alone will not do the job that is needed for education in Scott county, or in Forest.

Mr. Livingston has announced he favors an increase in teacher salaries, which is commendable, but we believe an extension of the term would give the teachers as much of an increase as the legislators would approve on a straight basis.

Patrons at Morton, where the biggest eight-month school in the county is located, have expressed approval of a nine-month term.

The county school board has announced that no county school can be given a ninth month unless the entire cost is borne by the state.

To extend schools to nine months without state funds would require double the amount of local contribution and the tax rate already is near the 25 mill limit set by statute. This situation exists all over the state.

The extra month would require a state appropriation of \$13,000,000 for the biennium, if every school switched to a nine-month basis. Under the minimum program, the same money would be divided into \$10-million from the state and \$3-million from local sources.

A salary increase alone would not help the other expense factors in the schools and if the minimum program is increased, it would mean additional local taxation.

We think Mr. Livingston should reconsider his attitude on the nine-month term. We don't want to see our Scott county representative, who is doing a good job, help hold back an opportunity for real progress.

Our state senator, Claude Norman of Hickory, favors state-wide nine month schools. How about it, Mr. Livingston?

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